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ABSTRACT

The More Effective Schools Program was designed to prevent academic failure of disadvantaged urban children by focusing on their basic language and mathematics problems. It attempted to improve the quality of a traditional educational program through reducing the pupil-teacher ratio; offering more small-group and individualized instruction; providing remedial, tutorial, and enrichment instruction; extending instruction to prekindergarten and after school periods; and encouraging teachers to employ innovative methods such as team teaching. In addition to administrative personnel, the staff includes guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, attendance teachers, psychiatrists, speech improvement teachers, community relations coordinators, classroom teachers, special teachers, and secretaries. When taking into account the effects of student attrition, the program does show benefits for the participants, although the superiority of program children over control groups has typically been quite small. Data from several evaluations support the conclusion that the program has been modestly successful in raising student achievement. (LH)

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Model Programs

Compensatory Education

More Effective Schools Program
New York, New York

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Model Programs

DHEW Publication No. (OE) 72-87

Compensatory Education

More Effective Schools Program
New York, New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Elliot L. Richardson, *Secretary*
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FOREWORD

This is the third in NCEC's *Model Programs* series, whose purpose is to inform educators about successful ongoing programs and to provide them with sufficient information to decide if locally modified replications would be desirable. Included in this series are descriptions of 15 "successful" compensatory education programs for disadvantaged children currently operating in the Nation's schools.

Under contract to the Office of Education, the American Institutes for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, Calif., identified—through a literature search and nominations by local, State, and national educational agencies—over 400 candidate programs in this area. Of this number only 17 met the stringent criteria for success established by AIR in conjunction with OE. It should be noted that most of the programs rejected during the study were not rejected because they were demonstrated failures but rather because their evaluation methodology was so inadequate that a conclusion about success or failure could not be drawn.

Short descriptions of each program in the series have been prepared, covering such topics as context and objectives, personnel, methodology, inservice training, parent involvement, materials and equipment, facilities, schedule, evaluation data, budget, and sources for further information.

Six of the programs in this series were formerly written up in the *It Works* series published by OE in 1969. These six continue to operate successfully, as evidenced by the evaluation data; and since the *It Works* booklets are out of print, the program descriptions have been updated and included in this *Model Programs* series.

Two other programs—Programed Tutorial Reading Project, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Summer Junior High Schools, New York, New York—identified as exemplary compensatory education programs were included in the former *Model Programs* series on reading. Since these program descriptions are still available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, they were not republished for this series.

Two previous *Model Programs* series have been issued—on reading (10 programs) and childhood education (33 programs). Booklets on these programs are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 15 to 25 cents each.

The More Effective Schools Program
New York, New York

Overview

The More Effective Schools Program, initiated in September 1964, was designed to prevent academic failure of disadvantaged urban children by focusing on their basic language and mathematics problems. Since 1964 the program has continued to grow with only minor methodological modifications from its 10-school beginning to 27 schools in 1970-71 involving approximately 27,000 students. The program has also been replicated in at least five sites throughout the country.

Description

Objectives

Following are the six objectives of the program:

1. To help poverty area children make substantial gains academically, particularly in reading and mathematics.
2. To help children become more relaxed in using materials and develop their ability to use language functionally.
3. To sharpen teachers' alertness to children's individual differences and learning styles,

Note:—This is an update of the It Works series publication "More Effective Schools, New York City," published by the Office of Education in 1970.

thus enabling them more effectively to formulate appropriate counter-measures in dealing with reading difficulties.

4. To develop a fuller appreciation of the community's importance for the school's educational effectiveness through a positive attitude and an increased understanding of the community life styles on the part of the school personnel and students.
5. To help the children develop positive attitudes toward school, toward the adults with whom they come into contact, and toward their classmates.
6. To further cement parent-school relationships by encouraging active parent participation.

Methodology

The More Effective Schools Program did not attempt to implement any radical curriculum innovations. Rather it attempted to improve the quality of a more or less traditional educational program through reducing the pupil-teacher ratio; offering more small-group and individualized instruction; providing remedial, tutorial, and enrichment instruction; extending instruction to prekindergarten and afterschool periods; and encouraging teachers to employ innovative methods such as team teaching.

Prekindergarten children attend school for a half day; kindergarten children, a full day. Classrooms are arranged into interest centers and children work in small groups, each supervised by an adult. In grades one through six, as in the preelementary years, a major instructional emphasis is placed on language and communication skills. From first grade on, reading is heavily stressed.

Class grouping is heterogeneous to provide a wide variety of abilities, interests, and personalities. Within-class groupings, on the other hand, are according to levels of achievement in specific curriculum areas and according to special needs. Class size is limited to a maximum of 15 from prekindergarten through first grade, to 20 in the

second grade, and to 22 in grades three through six. A description of the main features of the program follows.

Prekindergarten and kindergarten education—A prekindergarten program is offered to 3- and 4-year-olds to teach the basic skills necessary to the acquisition of more sophisticated cognitive abilities. The major goals of this program and the kindergarten program are (1) to develop desirable social attitudes and a sound self-image; (2) to develop oral communication skills basic to reading and other language art skills; (3) to foster independence in beginning research skills; (4) to extend gradually oral communication skills into meaningful written communication; (5) to develop numerical concepts basic to the understanding of other curriculum areas.

Although the physical plants of the prekindergarten and kindergarten programs resemble each other in arrangement and composition of the raw materials of learning, the teachers use the classrooms differently. Prekindergarten children spend the larger part of the day exploring and experimenting with the materials; kindergarten children rely on the basic "doing" experiences of the prekindergarten years as a springboard for the sharing, recalling, and recording activities of the kindergarten program.

A typical day in kindergarten might be divided into the following blocks of time, not necessarily in this order:

(1) Experience with raw materials
(2) Story time
(3) Music
(4) Lunch and rest
(5) Planning and discussion groups
(6) Outdoor play
(7) Trips

During these blocks of time, the children work in small groups rather than as one large class. One adult directs or supervises each group. The teacher plays a key role in individualizing the instruction in these groups.

After school study centers—When the regular school session ends at 3 p.m., the buildings remain open until 5 p.m. for the After School Study Centers. The programs of these centers, tailored to meet individual needs, provide remedial, tutorial, library, and enrichment classes. The centers are staffed by regular school faculty and are paid for by funds provided by the Office of Elementary Education.

Provision for children with special needs—To meet the needs of children with physical, emotional, and social problems, a teacher-guidance-medical team operates in each school. In addition to the teachers, the following personnel are available to each MES school: three guidance counselors, one social worker, one psychologist, one attendance teacher, and one part time psychiatrist.

Use of modern equipment—A complete range of audiovisual equipment is used by all MES schools. This includes the following: 16-mm sound motion picture and filmstrip projectors, filmstrip viewers, overhead projectors, slide and opaque projectors, tape recorders and phonographs with earphones and connection boxes, radios, and television receivers and cameras. Special emphasis is placed on using texts and other materials which stress urban backgrounds and deal with city children of varied racial and economic backgrounds.

Personnel

The following staff operate programs in the 27 schools:

Centralized administrative staff—(Two to five in number; full-time; usually assistant superintendents or assistant principals.) They coordinate the activities of all MES schools.

Principals. (27; full-time; licensed by the Board of Education of New York City.) They supervise projects in their respective schools.

Administrative assistants. (27; full-time.) They assist each principal by organizing and scheduling duties, and handling paper work.

Assistant principals. (Approximately 81, usually three to a school; full-time; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York.) Each assistant principal supervises one of the following: prekindergarten to grade two, grades three and four, or grades five and six. They conduct inservice teacher training, arrange parents' meetings, prepare monthly reports, and order supplies.

Pupil personnel team—(27 teams, one per school.)

1. Guidance counselors. (81, three per school; full-time; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York.)

2. Psychologists. (13; full-time; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York.)

3. Social workers. (Full-time; minimum requirement of a master's degree; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York in social work.) They work directly with the families of the pupils.

4. Attendance teachers. (Full-time; usually qualified as social workers; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York.) They visit the homes of pupils who are absent.

Psychiatrists. (Several; part-time.) They deal with pupils referred to them by the pupil personnel team.

Speech improvement teachers. (27; one per school; full-time; licensed by the Board of

Education of the City of New York.) They train teachers, provide demonstrations, and assist in team teaching.

Community relations coordinators. (27; usually one per school; licensed teachers with demonstrated ability in the field of human relationships.) They build viable parents' association, coordinate the school's program in the area of special service workshops, and direct other programs in which parents, school, and community are mutually involved.

Classroom teachers.—(About 300; full-time; licensed by the Board of Education of the City of New York.)

Other teaching positions (OTP's) and special teachers—(Approximately 190; full-time.) They are selected by the principal to best meet the needs of the school in the following areas: library, reading instruction, corrective reading, art, music, audiovisual, science, language resource, and health education.

Secretaries—(Three to five per school; full-time.)

In addition to the above personnel, each school employs aides who are uncredentialed and receive an hourly wage. They assist classroom teachers, the office staff, and the audiovisual staff. In a single year their assistance amounts to approximately 6,515 hours per school.

Evaluation and Followup

The first evaluation of the More Effective Schools Program showed no significant benefits accruing to program participants. As reported in the *It Works* description, however, this conclusion was reversed when the effects of student attrition were

considered. In most subsequent evaluations, similar care had to be exercised in controlling extraneous factors, as the superiority of program children over control groups has typically been quite small.

A comparison of gains made by program participants between October 1966 and April 1968 with gains made by appropriate controls produced statistically significant Metropolitan Reading Test differences favoring the program children. In four of the six program groups, student gains exceeded the month-for-month "norm" expectation, while five of the six control groups fell below this level.

An independent evaluation of the 1968-69 school year examined third and fifth graders at all previously evaluated program (17) and control (8) schools using Metropolitan Achievement Test scores. The conclusion reached was that even the slight advantages program children had over their controls at grade three disappeared by grade five. Grade-equivalent gains over the year also fell below the month-for-month expectation for both program groups.

This same evaluation examined gains made on the Metropolitan Reading Test over a 4-year period by experimental and control students initially tested at the beginning of grade two. At the end of the third grade, More Effective Schools pupils were ahead of the controls in both Word Knowledge and Reading, but by the end of fifth grade they had lost their advantage in Reading. Over the entire 4-year period, gains were less than month-for-month.

A similar comparison was made of 2-year gains from grade five to grade seven. At the time of the 1967 (fifth-grade) testing, the More Effective Schools children were 9 months ahead of the controls in both Work Knowledge and Reading. This difference was statistically significant. In 1969 the advantage of the experimental pupils had dropped

to 5 months and was not statistically significant. Gains for both experimentals and controls were less than month-for-month.

Data from the many evaluations which have been made of the More Effective Schools Program support the conclusion that the program has been modestly successful in raising student achievement over that of control groups in matched schools. In all cases the differences have been small and, for the most part, gains have been somewhat less than month-for-month. While program children are clearly outperforming the norm for disadvantaged children, they are not consistently approaching the national norm.

Source for Further Information

Further information on the program can be obtained from:

Mrs. Hortense Jones
More Effective Schools Program
Board of Education of the City of New York
141 Livingston Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

References

Forlano, G., and Abramson, J. *Longitudinal Study of Reading Growth in Selected More Effective and Comparable Schools.* New York: Board of Education of the City of New York, Bureau of Educational Research, March 1969.

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MODEL PROGRAMS—Compensatory Education Series

Fifteen promising compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged are included in this series. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

College Bound Program, New York, N. Y.

Diagnostic Reading Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio

The Fernald School Remediation of Learning Disorders Program, Los Angeles, Calif.

Higher Horizons 100, Hartford, Conn.

The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Ill.

Learning To Learn Program, Jacksonville, Fla.

More Effective Schools Program, New York, N.Y.

Mother-Child Home Program, Freeport, N.Y.

Preschool Program, Fresno, Calif.

Project Conquest, East St. Louis, Ill.

Project Early Push, Buffalo, N.Y.

Project MARS, Leominster, Mass.

Project R-3, San Jose, Calif.

PS 115 Alpha One Reading Program, New York, N.Y.

Remedial Reading Laboratories, El Paso, Texas

Two programs also identified for this series were described in the *Model Programs—Reading* series: Programed Tutorial Reading Project, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Summer Junior High Schools, New York, New York. Since these program descriptions are still current and available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, they were not rewritten for this series.

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